Limits of and possibilities for the reconstruction and development of Zimbabwe’s higher education system: an insider’s perspective from outside.

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What is the challenge: main focus of the presentation:

1. Key limits to reconstruction and development of the system.
2. The possibilities for reconstruction and development.
3. Continuities and discontinuities in the reconstruction of the system …
4. Conclusion: what can be done immediately.
Presentation acknowledges that

- Key actors in the system know the etiologies of the challenges and how to reconstruct and develop the system.
- There are gains being made in the system already. So there is hope and a promising future.
- A combination of local, regional, continental and global models are instructive to our challenges.
- A critical theoretical framework is essential as a lens to examine the issues at hand so as to understand the existing contradictions and a potential future state of higher education system.
Possibilities for improving learning, teaching and staff performance ...

- Critical reflection on relevance of our programs (local/global).
- Expose hiatus between the actual and the possible.
- What type of graduate do we want to produce?
- What is and should be our context of knowledge production?

Renewal of current programs (PQM)

Development of teaching & learning models?

- Contextualized models and frameworks of teaching and learning at all levels e.g. constructivism.
- Development of critical discourses in teaching, learning and research.
- Regional and global benchmarks.
- Contextualized models of QA in the Zimbabwean university.

Measuring institutional & individual performance

- Attempts to measure:
  - National targets.
  - Institutional targets.
  - Faculty targets.
  - Individual targets.
  - What is our niche areas?
  - Paucity of statistics
Thoughts on developing collective learning architectures: the possibilities


Facilities for engagement: communities of practice - competence, mutuality and continuity in learning in locally

Facilities for imagination: opportunities for exploration, trajectories & pushing boundaries in creativity by groups of universities

Facilities for alignment: common focus, vision, coordination of standards & methods, feedback, policies, processes, etc among universities
Thoughts on re-constructing QA in the academy: suggestions for ZCHE & ZUVCA

Deregulation and decentralization of power from the government to …

Institutions, Faculties, Departments and Individual academics

Monitors quality of programs in institutions and programs.

Incentives to universities for self regulation.

The invisible hand of the market regulates quality in universities?

State provides incentives to universities for self regulation.
## Alternative policy instruments for re-establishing QA in Zimbabwe

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<th>Focus</th>
<th>Locus of influence</th>
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<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
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<td>Professional self regulation</td>
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<td>Research</td>
<td>Professional peer judgment.</td>
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<td>Teaching and learning</td>
<td>• Professional disciplines and organizations.</td>
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<td>• Professional certification and licensure of courses.</td>
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<td>• External examining systems.</td>
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<td>• Voluntary accreditation.</td>
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Source: Adapted from: Dill, 2003:5.
Suggestions for a focus on knowledge production and skills development

Skills development: employment

Current economic crisis needs graduates who can create employment

Work integrated learning

Efforts to enhance relevance of curriculum and programs

Research and innovation: knowledge production

Linkages to the revitalization of economy, state and civil society

Focus on links between higher education and the economy

A refocus on post graduate training and research

Introducing possible role of the university in incubating ideas
Post graduate training & research: the possibilities …

- Focus on young academics and recent PhDs.
- Consolidation of doctoral training programs locally, in SA and abroad.
- Training in research methods for young researchers locally, in SA, and abroad.
- Should every university be involved in post graduate training?
- Should all universities be involved in research as the basis for teaching and learning?
- Are there lessons to be learned from the SA model of research and comprehensive universities?
Role of ICTs

- **Biggest challenges:**
  - Bandwidth availability in the country.
  - Reliability and cost of bandwidth for universities.

- **Possibilities:**
  - Expansion of the fiber optic cable from SA.
  - Use of blended modes of teaching & learning.
  - Development of pedagogical models to integrate teaching and multimedia technology applications.
  - Staff development to use technology for teaching, research and student support.
  - Training of students to migrate to online learning, tutor and peer support.
Role of ICTs: possibilities of the open world …

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<th>The role of ICTs:</th>
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<td>• Harnessing Zimbabwe’s intellectual capital in the Diaspora for post graduate mentoring, teaching and support.</td>
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| Use of open access, open source and open educational resources, plus distributed learning. |

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<th>P2PU Concept:</th>
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<td>• Sense makers structure online courses and tutors facilitate small groups of up to fourteen learners.</td>
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| Developing virtual communities of teaching and learning across borders. |
Some focus areas: improving library information systems

- Use of **free open access resources**.
- Development of communities of practice:
  - Sharing ideas on prioritization of digital & print resources such as e-books?
- Possible linkages to South African, African and global digital resources and organizations such as INASP.
- Creativity about the notion of the **physical library** and sourcing software and hardware for libraries!
Conclusion: what can be done immediately?

- Development of higher education leadership and management programs in conjunction with SA & overseas universities, bilateral and multilateral organizations. With a focus inter alia on:
  - Planning and Strategic Management.
  - Budgeting and Financial Management
  - Fund raising, marketing, incubation of projects and innovation
  - Academic and Staff Development
  - Managing the challenge of HIV/AIDS
  - Student services
  - Blended modes of teaching and learning
  - Creative use of existing facilities
Thanks